

lated as a matter of theory, Js held in practice as a truism which it is irrational, if not actually immoral, to question, since it is in the heart of the individual that religion has its throne, and to externalize it in rules and institutions is to tarnish its purity and to degrade its appeal. Naturally, therefore, they formulate the ethical principles of Christianity in terms of a comfortable ambiguity, and rarely indicate with any precision their application to commerce, finance, and the ownership of property. Thus the conflict between religion and those natural economic ambitions, which the thought of an earlier age had regarded with suspicion, is suspended by a truce which divides the life of mankind between them. The former takes as its province the individual soul, the latter the intercourse of man with his fellows in the activities of business and the affairs of society. Provided that each keeps to its own territory, peace is assured. They cannot collide, for they can never meet.

History is a stage where forces which are within human control contend and co-operate with forces which are not. The change of opinion described in these pages drew nourishment from both. The storm and fury of the Puritan revolution had been followed by a dazzling outburst of economic enterprise, and the transformation of the material environment

prepared
an atmosphere, in which a judicious
moderation seemed
the voice at once of the truest wisdom and
the sincerest
piety. But the inner world was in motion as
well as
the outer. The march of external progress
woke
sympathetic echoes in hearts already attuned
to applaud
its triumph, and there was no consciousness
of an acute
tension between the claims of religion and
the glittering
allurements of a commercial civilization,
such as had
tormented the age of the Reformation.

It was partly the natural, and not
unreasonable,
diffidence of men who were conscious that
traditional
doctrines of social ethics, with their
impracticable